

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW SUICIDE FATALITIES
DRAFT OPEN MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2021
9:00 AM

MEETING LOCATIONS:

This meeting was held via teleconference and videoconference only. Pursuant to Governor Sisolak's March 22, 2020, Declaration of Emergency Directive 006 which was extended by Directive 029, the requirement contained in NRS 241.023(1)(b) that there be a physical location is suspended in order to mitigate the possible exposure or transmission of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Accordingly, all members of the public were encouraged to participate by using the teleconference number or Teams Meeting link provided in the agenda.

VIDEOCONFERENCE:

Zoom Meeting Log-In

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88452731930?pwd=Mk9rSnNVUTFzVHd5SU5Kd0dGbHQ4Zz09>

TELECONFERENCE:

Dial-In:

1-669-900-6833 (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 884 5273 1930

Passcode: 096731

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Marlyn Scholl, LCSW, Veterans Health Administration, Sierra Nevada Health Care System, Reno, Co-Chair

Allison Zednicek, CEO, Desert Parkway, Interim CEO for Reno Behavioral Hospital

Lesley Dickson, MD, Nevada Psychiatric Association

Dr. Laura Knight, Chief Medical Examiner and Coroner Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office

Fran Maldonado, Tribal Liaison, Division of Child and Family Services

Jamie Elizabeth Ross, Executive Director, PACT Coalition for Safe and Drug-Free Communities

Terry Kerns, Substance Abuse Law Enforcement Coordinator, Nevada Attorney General's Office

Sheila L. Leslie, MA, Retired, Washoe County Social Services, Consultant, Sagepine Strategies

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Mike Bernstein, M. Ed., Nevada Coalition for Suicide Prevention, Co-Chair

DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAFF PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Misty Vaughan Allen, Nevada Statewide Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH), Bureau of Child Family and Community Wellness (BCFCW), Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP)

Richard Egan, Training and Outreach Facilitator, DPBH-BCFCW-OSP

Angela Friedman, Administrative Assistant IV, DPBH-BCFCW-OSP

OTHERS PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Sharon Benson, Senior Deputy Attorney General, NV Attorney General's Office

Sergeant Chris Kennedy, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Homicide Section

1. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

All attendees, including members, introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Marlyn Scholl asked for public comment. None was heard.

Misty Allen noted bills introduced in Nevada's 81st Legislative Session which might be of interest to the committee: SB44, SB70, SB36, SB69, and a bill to implement and sustain the new 9-8-8 crisis line with a new fee. Lesley Dickson provided brief clarification on SB44 and SB70 bills. She added SB56, SB05, and BDR457 may also be of interest to the committee.

Ms. Scholl announced her retirement from the Veterans Administration and showed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the committee. She will suggest a replacement to fill her committee membership.

Terry Kerns noted Dr. Jesus Jara from Clark County School District was on a national morning television talk show discussing the mental health crisis and mentioned the 19 suicide deaths in Clark County since remote schooling began. Dr. Dickson noted the story was also in the New York Times.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 24TH, 2020 MEETING MINUTES.

MARLYN SCHOLL ENTERTAINED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 24TH, 2020 MEETING. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY LESLEY DICKSON. TERRY KERNS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT PUBLIC COMMENT.

Ms. Scholl asked for public comment. None was heard.

4. DISCUSS, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

Sheila Leslie and Richard Egan discussed the cross reference of data from the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center related to Route 91 October 1st event and suicide deaths in Nevada. The vast majority of the 22,000 ticket holders were from out of state. No connection was found between the event and anyone who died by suicide in Nevada between October 1st, 2020 and December 31st, 2020. Mr. Egan alluded the support for the survivors in Nevada might have prevented losses, but that cannot be determined.

Ms. Leslie discussed multiple groups within the community--first responders, concert workers, hospitals and the community at large--were among the 8000 cases in the database. The cases reviewed included only those directly affected by the tragedy.

Mr. Egan noted the research of connection among groups experiencing the same or similar life experiences having less likelihood of dying by suicide. Marlyn Scholl discussed military persons' connection to the Veterans Administration's health system and the correlation to the risk for suicide. She questioned the relationship between acute stress reaction, chronic post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), intervention support and suicides. She suggested a study to research the long-term effects of intervention.

Mr. Egan and Terry Kern discussed the possibility and difficulty of collecting data related to other states' suicides and connection to Route 91.

Misty Allen has not received feedback from the Humboldt County law enforcement on the report created two years ago. The focus on the next report to the Director will include COVID-19, youth and suicides in Nevada.

Ms. Scholl thanked Mr. Egan and Ms. Leslie for the work they accomplished.

5. DISCUSS AND UPDATE FOR APPOINTMENT TO FILL THE ONE VACANT COMMITTEE MEMBER POSITION: A MEMBER TO REPRESENT LAW ENFORCEMENT.

Misty Allen introduced Sgt. Chris Kennedy and explained his application for membership is being processed. Sgt. Kennedy introduced himself. The members introduced themselves.

6. MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS, PURSUANT TO NRS 439.5106 FOR CHANGES IN ANY LAW, POLICY OR PRACTICE THAT MAY ASSIST THE COMMITTEE IN PREVENTING SUICIDE FATALITIES IN THIS STATE OR RELATED SERIOUS OCCURRENCES, TO BE PRESENTED IN THE REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

Misty Allen discussed the directive on reporting suicide attempts and ideations in hospital emergency departments using the same opioid software which collects real time data.

She reminded the committee of the discussion to revise the committee bylaws to include participation of additional members on recommendation of the committee. Sharon Benson concurred individuals from other disciplines can be added as valuable members. Terry Kerns suggested inviting peer recovery specialists. Richard Egan suggested a person experienced in helping the homeless. Marlyn Scholl suggested a school district representative be involved. Ms. Allen noted the Child Death Review data can overlap with information and suggested involvement of a community college representative. Lesley Dickson discussed the increased involvement of psychiatrists in matters related to child deaths and suicide. Mr. Egan and Dr. Dickson noted the mental health representative vacancy in Child Death Review Team and suggested a psychiatrist who might want to fill the vacancy. Jamie Ross also recommended a representative of the homeless population.

Ms. Allen suggested discussion on opioid overdose reviews and feasibility of bringing those reviews under the purview of the committee.

Sharon Benson asked if the review would include intentional overdose as opposed to accidental overdose. Terry Kerns clarified it would be looking at the possibility of suicide by overdose of opiates and consistency in reporting. Laura Knight agreed the reporting methods and referrals are inconsistent. Dr. Knight and Dr. Kerns discussed current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data sources and the states collecting their own data. Dr. Knight questioned if and what other data the states collected outside of the CDC databases. Sharon Benson cautioned the need for legislative statutory change if data collected and reviewed was not specifically concerned with suicide deaths.

Dr. Dickson noted emergency rooms (ER) struggle to successfully refer survivors of

overdoses, whether accidental or intentional, to treatment outside the hospital. Allison Zednick noted ER departments have the highest turnover with predominantly contracted nurses. The behavioral health hospitals still use ERs as a point of entry to treatment.

Terry Kerns noted an intern looked at overdoses and the mandate to refer overdoses to the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. The referrals were based on ICD-9 and 10 codes and not chief complaint. Mandate compliance was 20% based on chief complaints and not the diagnosis. Dr. Dickson noted the difficulty in ICD-9 and 10 codes not specifically noting suicide attempt and lack of standardization. Marlyn Scholl said suicides are not coded because providers cannot bill for a deceased. She noted the codes used with suicide attempts.

Jamie Ross mentioned the significant spike in overdoses in 2020, stating most could be directly related to fentanyl. She noted the upstream prevention in primary healthcare is the focus on reducing risk no matter the means. Richard Egan noted the resistance to report an overdose as a suicide. Dr. Knight spoke of the challenge of determining suicide in overdose deaths. She discussed fentanyl deaths and determining suicide. She believes most drug overdoses are accidental. Ms. Allen and Dr. Kerns will look at other states and the data they are collecting.

Richard Egan suggested looking at Zero Suicide efforts. Ms. Allen suggested bringing Cherylyn Rahr-Wood, Zero Suicide Coordinator into the discussion.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Marlyn Scholl asked for public comment.

Misty Allen gave an overview of the suicide rankings from the American Association for Suicidology for 2019 and 2020, noting the numbers and rates in Nevada have decreased.

No other public comment was heard.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Marylyn Scholl adjourned the open portion of the meeting at 10:20 AM.